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ing to each picture in succession repeating in English the word mud, mud, mud! I had always painted in a low key myself, but from that moment I saw with clear eyes that in the days to come, in the "divine art" that is to be, we will use, not earth-colors, but rainbow colors!

While I was painting the portrait of Abdul Baha, which, by the way, under some extraordinary influence, I did in three hours, I asked for a criticism. Consider that Abdul Baha had been shut away from the world all his life. He had gone into prison a little boy of eight and come out at sixty-four. Surely the talk of studios had never reached him! But these were the actual words of his criticism: "Clean up the color!" I could have imagined it was my friend Albert Sterner speaking!

Another incident which may be of interest: While Abdul Baha was in New York, I went with him one day to the Natural History Museum. When we entered the room of Aztec art Abdul Baha immediately exclaimed: "This is like the Egyptian art, only

these things are better." He then pointed out to me certain details which showed Persian influence.

"They say" I remarked "that before a great catastrophe there was connection between Asia and America."

"Assuredly" he replied "previous to a great cataclysm there was such a connection."

Is not this rather a new conception of the Prophet? Have we ever thought of the prophets of old as many-sided beings, interested in all the aspects and activities of life and denying the spirit to none of them?

In driving around Boston one day with a distinguished Syrian artist Abdul Baha remarked on the flatness of the roofs of our houses.

"Why do they not build their houses with domes?" he said.

I myself think that it is because we of the West are as yet spiritually domeless! When the structure of our being is completed by the spiritual development, then will we build in beauty!

Juliet Thompson

MUSIC CANNED AND FRESH

By WINTHROP PARKHURST

AUTOMATICALLY reproduced music—that is to say, music which is performed either on the piano-player or the talking machine—was passionately courted by the public long before the chaperons of art ever got wind of the scandal and declared the intrigue immoral. Indeed, until quite recently (say, six or seven years ago) such music as was not performed by hand was not properly considered music at all. It was an outcast of true art, a common street-walker in the City of Sound; and no anathema was too terrible for it, no curse too blasphemous. It was kicked and buffeted and spat on and made fun of generally—and particularly—by every musician in the Union. Professional opinion bombarded the movement of automaticism with real professional frightfulness. At the very outset it blew up the entire question into a million pieces; and then, when it had done that, it commenced counting the pieces as added proof of the inherent instability of the notion it had just attacked. It not only carried war into the enemy's camp: it carried war beyond it.

With the appalling ferocity of men fighting for a just and peaceful cause, musicians went ahead and bloodied their swords on the most innocent obstructions in their path. Not content, for instance, with condemning mechanical contrivances because they were mechanical, they condemned them as well because they were contrivances. They piled scorn upon abuse and upon both, murder. And they did it splendidly, magnificently, because they were inspired by a Vision. They saw, or thought they saw, beyond the as yet unfulfilled dreams of the inventors of the talking machine and the piano-player. They saw, or thought they saw, that not only the product but the purpose back of the product was wrong. First they damned mechanical instruments because they were not able to do what they were supposed to do. Then, later, when the talking machine and the piano-player

improved and showed themselves capable of truly artistic work, they damned because they *were* able to do it.

This rather violent foot-note to recent musical history should not shock or grieve anybody who has read on to the end of the chapter and turned to the appendix for an explanation. For, if any wrong ever achieved perfect vindication in this world of crying injustices, the final instatement of automatic music in the professional world will serve for as beautiful a specimen as one can demand. Within half a dozen years after a violent tirade against all forms of mechanically produced music, the piano-player and the talking machine had marched from the nursery of mere entertainment into the grand salon of Art; and a movement that today is hardly much older than the average man's third-best suit of clothes found itself only yesterday set up on a pinnacle of publicity and flatteringly dubbed Great.

The reasons behind this sudden change of front, as well as the reasons behind the original attitude, are not hard to discover. They lie quite conveniently in human nature itself. Ideas, any more than men, do not get slapped on the back by the world before they have got slapped several times on the face first. Revolt against the intrusion of the mechanical element into music was as inevitable as is revolt (especially by the technical mind) against the intrusion of any novel and thoroughly original idea into a universe cluttered with platitudes and the bodies of dead creeds. For a time, at least, the conception of a musicianless world (for which the advent of automatic music seemed more than merely preparatory) was as repellent to the true musician as the advent of the first automobile was to any self-respecting horse. Yet, when that initial horror passed off—when musicians saw, as the horses must also have seen in regard to automobiles, that the new invention was actually going to rob them of

nothing in the world but some unenviable hard work, and that, by democratising pure labor, it was putting a higher premium on pure interpretation than had ever been put on it before, they softened their judgment of mechanical instruments and at last publicly recognized the fact of their tremendous importance in the universe of tonal art.

For, stupid and short-sighted as most musicians were in this matter, they were at least shrewd enough to realize that for a man to express a fear that a machine might take the place of his own soul is as much as to confess that he has no soul at all. Thus probably it was that the musician's original grievance languished and died. At any rate, nowadays, such is the fickleness of the whirligig of time, there is nobody quite so zealous for the cause of automatic music as the professional musician himself!

There are some, to be sure, a very few, who still eye the movement with profound distrust and suspicion. They can see nothing at all in the sudden leap into prosperity of the piano-player and talking machine manufacturers but a heroic dash for freedom with their own profits. And they are sickened and saddened by the thought of the growing degeneracy of present-day art. But, as these vendors of doom and despair are almost invariably those musicians who have never been invited to record their emotions on some reproducing machine, it is natural that they feel obliged to record their emotions on the world. Only, their objections should be appropriately discounted.

Now, the foregoing is hardly more than an introductory skirmish to the real problem which I want to attack. In a sense it is not even introductory to it. For, as far as this movement of automaticism actually touches the professional musician himself, it may be said to be quite out of range of our critical guns. From the point of view of the amateur at least—and that is the only point of view I am interested in at present—the value of the talking machine and piano-player must be weighed in the scales of sheer utilitarianism. Nevertheless, though we are frankly not concerned at all with the professional's side of the question we are obliged to take his side into account, if we really want to understand the present enormous vogue among the unprofessional public of these two machines. And not merely the vogue, either, for that was established before musicians gave the movement their sanction; but rather, let me say, the present solid conviction among practically everybody that automatic music is at last something Really Worth While. We may ignore as much as we like the influence of mechanical music on the professional world. We will not, if we are wise, ignore the influence of mechanical music on the professional music.

Of course, several years ago, when this movement of automaticism was fired on by a tremendous broadside of dialectic shells every time it showed its head in the open, the public remained loyal to its espoused cause. From the very first, as we have seen, mechanical music was adjudged better than no music at all. And the public said so. Even after continued assaults on its integrity by the professional world, amateurs stuck to their original faith and continued to say so.

In this respect at least they showed for once a commendable independence of spirit. Literally, they

showed they *had* spirit. At last, for once in his life, the unprofessional man refused to be awed by elaborate professional terminology. He dared to call his soul his own. He walked up to the high priests of art and said: "These mechanical devices which you scorn because you are trained musicians are to me artistic necessities, and I henceforth intend to use them as much as possible. If the talking machine fails at present to reproduce an artist's performance faithfully, I cannot help that. If the piano-player as it is now constituted cannot do much more than give me the bare notes of a composition, I cannot help that, either. These are defects of the instrument; I admit them all. But at least you must agree with me that however great are the defects that at present inhere in all mechanically produced music, in itself mechanically produced music is not a defect. On the contrary it is a highly important invention for reproducing at will, and as often as I like, any composition in the entire realm of tonal art. It is an invention which I, an amateur in that art, most supremely need. I will thank you to mind your own business."

He said this, and he acted on the creed he had just formulated. He went ahead and bought a talking machine and a piano-player. He started them both going, full tilt. He opened all the windows in his house, wide. He was consistently and persistently a militant insurrectionist. Doubtless his sentimental reference to the educational possibilities opening up before him was put in for pure effect. It is highly unlikely that when he bought his piano-player and talking machine he was looking out for anything beside an evening's entertainment. But the fact remains, notwithstanding, that he really did go ahead with his plan in complete indifference to the scorn of his professional brother. He was as little ashamed of parading his bad taste before a battery of cultured ridicule as a chorus girl is of showing her leg to the censor.

Such refreshing freedom as this might seem to argue (if nothing else) a genuine ability on the part of the public to think matters out for itself, and then, having thought them out, to go ahead and make use of its conclusions in a really independent fashion. Unfortunately the facts of the case puncture this bubble of delightful polyannic wisdom with one heart-rending jab. It would be unfair, of course, to assert that the solid place which mechanical music has won in the affairs of the American people—or, for that matter, of the French, or English or German people—has been due to this sudden increase of professional enthusiasm for the cause. Earlier history disproves that. The public has shown itself able to make up its own mind for itself. Only—and herein lies the crux of the whole matter—when once the professional musician subscribed to the movement the public immediately discovered a new and splendid argument for its case. Automaticism needed only this last endorsement to take on the dignity of a true revolution. And now professional interest has so lent the weight of its authority to the movement that the unprofessional man who once bought a piano-player or a talking machine with which to amuse himself, buys today a piano-player or a talking machine with which to educate himself. He is convinced (and a good deal of the skilled opinion of the world backs him up in the conviction)

that at last there has been discovered a royal road if not to learning at least to culture.

There is no use making a wry mouth over the situation. The world is not going to the dogs because this has happened. It is tantalizingly easy to exaggerate the danger of what has already occurred. As a matter of strict fact, very little has occurred. From a position of open skepticism and scorn the professional world has, by degrees, come to regard mechanical music more kindly, that is all. And conservative musicians the world over—men who, a dozen years ago, were up in arms against this advancing tide of machine-made music—have now relented to the point of proclaiming machine-made music one of the astounding and beautiful things of this age!

And it is. Every year has seen some marked improvement in the construction of both talking machines and piano-players. In the matter of reproducing an artist's performance, of mirroring the most delicate shades of his musical thought, mechanisms may now be said to have been perfected almost up to the last stage of perfection. Perhaps one day they will even be absolutely perfect. Such a thing is conceivable, it is possible. But whether they are ever completely perfect or not is beside the main point—whether they can serve as a sort of lazy man's bridge between culture and ignorance. That they *can* serve as such a bridge is the dangerous doctrine which the sponsors of the movement of automaticism today stand ready to preach.

I do not want to exaggerate a very apparent evil; and I do not think I am exaggerating it. In a sense the evil has always existed, for potentially it is as old as music itself. When the public first attended a *tom-tom recital* and sat round on the ground listening to two or three selected performers beat upon some hollow gourds, the danger I have been speaking of was as alive as it is to-day, when the public sits round on wooden seats listening to Paderewski beat upon a grand piano. For the danger of course, as must be apparent to every one by this time, lies simply in this fact of one man's doing the thinking and feeling and sweating for a multitude of men. It lies at the very heart of the carelessly discarded truth that in a true democracy—and the only true democracy we have is art—every man must not only be a voter but a king.

And what is the remedy for the disease?

Well, there are no sure cures for anything in this world from mumps down to madness; but the first step in the cure of most dangerous maladies is to get the patient into bed as quickly as possible and keep him there until it is impossible. Personally, I do not believe in goading a man into being healthy

or happy or wise. You cannot legislate humanity into heaven; and if you can you have got no business to. Nevertheless, if I were President of the United States and could have my thumb on Congress for about ten minutes to-morrow morning, I should frame a bill this very afternoon restricting the sale and use of all mechanical-musical instruments solely and absolutely and eternally to those who were accomplished musicians already. For it is one of God's immortal truths and one which must be clear to anybody who has given the matter fifteen seconds serious consideration, that it will only be under some such drastic definition of the legitimate functions of automatic music that un-automatic music can establish its empire. *So long as the piano-player and the talking machine are permitted to serve as substitutes for rather than as aids to musical appreciation so long will musical appreciation suffer. And they will serve as such substitutes just so long—no longer and no shorter—as the idle listening to, and the idle drinking-in of, music stands in the place that thoughtful, deliberate study of a composition which is possible only to the man who actually performs it.*

This, it must not be supposed, is denying that mechanical music—canned music, as it has rather unappetizingly been called—has its rightful place under the sun. Simply as a ready means of acquainting the public with a vast library of musical literature which it otherwise would never come to know, it is deserving of a barrel-full of praise. From the artist's standpoint, moreover, as a method of comparing with a greater or less degree of accuracy yesterday's inspiration with to-day's, our debt to automaticism can scarcely be over-estimated.

But that is entirely aside of the question I have not been interested to examine. All I have wanted to do, really—and I see of course as clearly as any one else how inadequately and sketchily I have done it—was to point out the dangers which lie in the path of the man who attempts to get down into the heart of music without very literally going down and getting into the very heart of it.

It is vastly easier to have music brought to us than it is to bring ourselves to music. But you cannot make culture an easy thing. The dangers which ambush this whole movement of automaticism—the dangers, in fact, which menace and surround and penetrate every attempt to make art popular and put beauty on a bill-board, are not that when you have finished the job you will have hurt art at all, but simply that you will have hurt the public. The fact that these dangers are seldom recognized is, of course, not astonishing in the least. For that is one of the dangers.

Winthrop Parkhurst

